

English Toolkit: Indicator 1.2.2

Goal 1.0 Reading, Reviewing and Responding to Texts

Expectation 1.2 The student will construct, examine, and extend meaning of traditional and contemporary works recognized as having significant literary merit.

Indicator 1.2.2 The student will determine how the speaker, organization, sentence structure, word choice, tone, rhythm, and imagery reveal an author's purpose.

Assessment Limits:

Identifying and/or explaining the significance of the following as each contributes to the author's purpose

- a particular speaker in a text
- the arrangement of ideas in a particular way
- the arrangement of words or phrases
- words that convey author's purpose
- syntax, words, and syllables that create rhythm to reveal the meaning of the text
- implied meaning or particular image associated with a particular word or phrase

Table of Contents

Indicator 1.2.2 Tools

- Public Release Item #1 - Selected Response (SR) - 2005
- Public Release Item #2 - Selected Response (SR) - 2005
- Public Release Item #3 - Selected Response (SR) - 2006
- Public Release Item #4 - Selected Response (SR) - 2006
- Public Release Item #5 - Selected Response (SR) - 2006
- Public Release Item #6 - Selected Response (SR) - 2006
- Public Release Item #7 - Selected Response (SR) - 2007
- Public Release Item #8 - Selected Response (SR) - 2007
- Public Release Item #9 - Selected Response (SR) - 2007

Handouts

- English Resource: Mussels in April
- English Resource: In the Country of Grasses
- English Resource: Breakfast
- English Resource: Anna and the King
- English Resource: Foul Shot
- English Resource: Yes, I Can!
- English Resource: Bug, Interrupted
- English Resource: Fireflies In The Garden
- English Resource: Rough Road Ahead: Do Not Exceed Posted Speed Limit.
- English Resource: Unfolding Bud

Scoring

- Answer Key

Public Release #1 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2005

English Indicator 1.2.2

Handout(s):

- English Resource: Mussels in April

Read the poem "Mussels in April." Then answer the following.

In line 10, the speaker most likely refers to the mussels as "sealed mysteries" to

- convey a sense of wonder about the experience
- express regret that rituals of childhood are over
- suggest that collecting the mussels is tiring work
- emphasize how well the mussels are hidden in the rocks

Public Release #2 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2005

English Indicator 1.2.2

Handout(s):

- English Resource: In the Country of Grasses

Read this sentence from the last paragraph of "In The Country of Grasses."

As my eyes become acquainted with lion, I begin to distinguish fur from grass.

Which of these statements best explains the meaning of this sentence?

- At first, all lions look alike to the author, but once she gets a better look, she can tell individual lions apart.
- The lions are camouflaged in the tall grass, but the longer the author looks, the better she can make them out.
- Though fearful of the lions as they hide in the tall grass, the author soon begins to make friends with the animals.
- Having never seen lions, the author has no idea what they look like, but little by little, she begins to identify their features.

Public Release #3 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2006

English Indicator 1.2.2

Handout(s):

- English Resource: Breakfast

Read "Breakfast," the first chapter from the novel *Jim the Boy*. Then answer the following:

Occasionally the uncles grew cross with each other, and, for a few days, Uncle Al and Uncle Coran would retire to their houses immediately after supper. There they sat by their own fires, or on their own porches, and kept their own counsel until their anger passed.

These details are included to show that the uncles want to

- determine blame
- avoid arguments
- protect their privacy

D. seek outside assistance

Public Release #4 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2006

English Indicator 1.2.2

Handout(s):

- English Resource: Anna and the King

Read the screenplay *Anna and the King*. Then answer the following:

Read this line from the scene.

MONGKUT (*eyes flashing*): You do not set conditions, and you shall OBEY!

According to the stage directions, how should the actor playing King Mongkut deliver this line?

- A. angrily
- B. anxiously
- C. doubtfully
- D. suspiciously

Public Release #5 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2006

English Indicator 1.2.2

Handout(s):

- English Resource: Foul Shot

Read the poem "Foul Shot." Then answer the following:

In line 4, the poet uses the phrase "squeezed by silence" to describe the effect of

- A. the time clock on the crowd
- B. the spectators on the player
- C. the player's hands on the ball
- D. the size of the court on the game

Public Release #6 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2006

English Indicator 1.2.2

Handout(s):

- English Resource: Yes, I Can!

Read the essay "Yes, I Can!" Then answer the following.

When the author says the frontiersmen's "real possibles were contained in a skin bag carried just behind their eyeballs," he is suggesting that the frontiersmen

- A. carried extra possibles bags
- B. were secretive about their possibles bag
- C. used intelligence and imagination to survive
- D. depended on their eyes and ears to avoid trouble

Public Release #7 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2007

English Indicator 1.2.2

Handout(s):

- English Resource: Bug, Interrupted
- English Resource: Fireflies In The Garden

Read the essay "Bug, Interrupted." Then answer the following:

Which of these descriptions of fireflies in "Bug, Interrupted" is NOT supported by the images in the poem "Fireflies in the Garden"?

- A. "shimmering creatures"
- B. "moving every which way"
- C. "a treasure-trove of flashing delight"
- D. "trapped in the glass castle"

Public Release #8 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2007

English Indicator 1.2.2

Handout(s):

- English Resource: Rough Road Ahead: Do Not Exceed Posted Speed Limit.

Read the essay "Rough Road Ahead: Do Not Exceed Posted Speed Limit." Then answer the following:

When the author cautions cyclists against accepting advice from "old-timers who haven't left the confines of their porches since Carter was in office," he is suggesting that the men's

- A. information is out of date
- B. houses are in need of repair
- C. knowledge of cycling is limited
- D. politics differ from the author's

Public Release #9 - Selected Response Item - Released in 2007

English Indicator 1.2.2

Handout(s):

- English Resource: Unfolding Bud

Read the poem "Unfolding Bud." Then answer the following:

The poet most likely uses the words "Revealing its rich inner self" in line 15 to show

- A. that a poem is like nature
- B. how difficult it is to write poetry
- C. that poetry often has hidden meaning
- D. how a reader should respond to the poem

Handouts

Mussels in April¹

by Peter Neumeyer

"All months with R,"² my father said

So

—come April, wearing slip-proof Keds

we'd leap the rocks,

start up the squawking gulls,

crouch, wrench, twist the bearded blueblack treasures
streaked with silver.

5

Once home, we'd turn the pail, discard the open,

simmer in seaweed and their own salt tears

those sealed mysteries till they gapped

and through the smallest slit, their golden eyes

would squint.

10

These family moments—cold outings, simmering pots,

scraped fingers, salty steam, the clickclack shells—

these rituals to my children I'll pass on;

and they'll do likewise when I'm gone.

15

¹ Mussels: soft-bodied water animal that is protected by its shell; saltwater mussels live in shallow coastal waters, where they attach themselves to rocks

² "All months with R": a saying that means it is safe to eat shellfish during the cooler months with names containing an "R" (September through April)

"Mussels in April" by Peter Neumeyer, from *Food Fight*, copyright © 1986 by Share Our Strength, Inc. Reprinted with permission of Share Our Strength, Inc

When traveling to new country, it is a gift to have a guide. They know the nuances¹ of the world they live in. Samuel smells rain the night before it falls. I trust his instincts and borrow them until I uncover my own. But there is danger here. One can become lazy in the reliance on a guide. The burden of a newcomer is to pay attention.

The Land Rover slips into the savannah like a bird dog entering a marsh. We are fully present. I watch Samuel's eyes scan the horizon. He points south.

"Zebra," he says. "They are migrating north from Tanzania. Thousands more are on their way."

Hundreds of zebras walk the skyline. They become animated heat waves.

We drive closer. I have never seen such concentrations of animals. At one point I think I hear thunder. It is the hooves of wildebeests. Suddenly, the herd of zebra expands to include impalas, gazelles, and animals I do not recognize.

"Topi," Samuel says.

I flip through my field guide of African mammals and find it. An extraordinary creature, it is the color of mahogany with blue patches on its flanks and ocher² legs. I look at the topi again, this time through binoculars. Its black linear face with spiraling horns creates the illusion of a primitive mask. The topi I watch stands motionless on a termite mound. Binoculars down, I look at Samuel. He says the topi resemble hartebeests. A small herd of topi runs in front of the vehicle in a rocking-horse gait³ and vanishes.

⁸Samuel gives away his knowledge sparingly—in gentle, quiet doses. He is respectful of his teachers and those he is teaching. In this way he is generous. He gives me the pleasure of discovery. Slowly, African riddles unravel themselves like a piece of cut linen.

The sweet hissing of grasses accompanies us as we move ahead. We pass the swishing tails of wildebeests. We are looking for lions.

¹⁰Anticipation is another gift for travelers in unfamiliar territory. It quickens the spirit. The contemplation of the unseen world; imagination piqued⁴ in consideration of animals.

We stop. Samuel points. I see nothing. I look at Samuel for clues. He points again. I still see nothing but tall, tawny grasses around the base of a lone tree. He smiles and says, "Lions."

I look. I look so hard it becomes an embarrassment—and then I see eyes. Lion eyes. Two amber beads with a brown matrix. Circles of contentment until I stand; the lion's eyes change, and I am flushed with fear.

"Quiet," Samuel whispers. "We will watch for a while."

As my eyes become acquainted with lion, I begin to distinguish fur from grass. I realize there are two lions, a male and a female lying together under the stingy shade of a thorn tree. I can hear them breathe. The male is breathing hard and fast, his black mane in rhythm with the breeze. He puts his right paw on the female's shoulder. Ears twitch. We are no more than ten feet away. He yawns. His yellow canines are as long as my index finger. His jowls look like well-worn leather. He stands. The grasses brush his belly. Veins protrude from his leg muscles. This lion is lean and strong. No wonder that in the Masai mind every aspect of a lion is imbued⁵ with magic.

-
- ¹ nuances: degrees of difference in meaning
 - ² ocher: color having shades of yellow, orange, and brown
 - ³ gait: way of moving by lifting the feet in a different order or rhythm such as a trot, gallop, or run
 - ⁴ piqued: excited one's interest or curiosity
 - ⁵ imbued: filled; saturated

"In the Country of Grasses" by Terry Williams, from *An Unspoken Hunger* by Terry Tempest Williams, copyright © 1994 by Terry Tempest Williams. Used by permission of Pantheon Books, a division of Random House, Inc.

Breakfast

by Tony Earley

During the night something like a miracle happened: Jim's age grew an extra digit. He was nine years old when he went to sleep, but ten years old when he woke up. The extra number had weight, like a muscle, and Jim hefted¹ it like a prize. The uncles' ages each contained two numbers, and now Jim's age contained two numbers as well. He smiled and stretched and sniffed the morning. Wood smoke; biscuits baking; the cool, rivy smell of dew. Something not quite daylight looked in his window, and something not quite darkness stared back out. A tired cricket sang itself to sleep. The cricket had worked all night. Jim rose to meet the waiting day.

Jim's mother opened the stove door with a dishrag. Mama was tall and pale and handsome; her neck was long and white. Although she was not yet thirty years old, she wore a long, black skirt that had belonged to her mother. The skirt did not make her seem older, but rather made the people in the room around her feel odd, as if they had wandered into an old photograph, and did not know how to behave. On the days Mama wore her mother's long clothes, Jim didn't let the screen door slam.

"There he is," Mama said. "The birthday boy."

Jim's heart rose up briefly, like a scrap of paper on a breath of wind, and then quickly settled back to the ground. His love for his mother was tethered² by a sympathy Jim felt knotted in the dark of his stomach. The death of Jim's father had broken something inside her that had not healed. She pulled the heaviness that had once been grief behind her like a plow. The uncles, the women of the church, the people of the town, had long since given up on trying to talk her into leaving the plow where it lay. Instead they grew used to stepping over, or walking inside, the deep furrows she left in her wake. Jim knew only that his mother was sad, and that he figured somehow in her sadness. When she leaned over to kiss him, the lilaced smell of her cheek was as sweet and sad at once as the smell of freshly turned earth in the churchyard.

"Oh Jimmy," she said. "How in the world did you get to be ten years old?"

"I don't know, Mama," Jim said, which was the truth. He was as amazed by the fact as she was. He had been alive for ten years; his father, who had also been named Jim Glass, had been dead for ten years and a week. It was a lot to think about before breakfast.

Mama put the biscuits she pulled from the oven into a straw basket. Jim carried the basket into the dining room. The uncles sat around the long table.

"Who's that?" Uncle Coran said.

"I don't know," said Uncle Al.

"He sure is funny-looking, whoever he is," said Uncle Zeno.

"Y'all know who I am," said Jim.

"Can't say that we do," said Uncle Coran.

"I'm Jim."

"Howdy," said Uncle Al.

"Y'all stop it," Jim said.

The uncles were tall, skinny men with broad shoulders and big hands. Every morning they ate between them two dozen biscuits and a dozen scrambled eggs and a platter of ham. They washed it all down with a pot of black coffee and tall glasses of fresh milk.

"Those biscuits you got there, Jim?" said Uncle Zeno.

Jim nodded.

"Better sit down, then."

In all things Jim strove to be like the uncles. He ate biscuits and eggs until he thought he was going to be sick. When Uncle Zeno finally said, "You think you got enough to eat, Doc?" Jim dropped his fork as if he had received a pardon.

Uncle Zeno was Jim's oldest uncle. His age was considerable, up in the forties somewhere. Uncle Coran and Uncle Al were twins. Each of them swore that he did not look like the other one, which of course wasn't true. They looked exactly alike, until you knew them, and sometimes even then. Not one of the uncles found it funny that they lived in identical houses.

Uncle Al and Uncle Coran built their houses when they were young men, but, like Uncle Zeno, they never took wives. Most of the rooms in their houses didn't even have furniture; only Uncle Zeno's house had a cookstove.

Jim's mother cooked and cleaned for the uncles. When she said it was too much, the uncles hired a woman to help her. Uncle Coran ran the feed store and cotton gin. Uncle Al managed the farms. Uncle Zeno farmed with Uncle Al and operated the gristmill on Saturday mornings. As the head of the family he kept an eye on everyone else. Occasionally the uncles grew cross with each other, and, for a few days, Uncle Al and Uncle Coran would retire to their houses immediately after supper. There they sat by their own fires, or on their own porches, and kept their own counsel³ until their anger passed. In general, however, everyone in the family got along well with everyone else; to Jim, the sound of harsh words would always strike his ear as oddly as a hymn played in the wrong key.

Jim patted his stomach. "That ought to hold me till dinner," he said.

"You ate a right smart," Uncle Coran said.

"Well," said Jim, "I am ten years old now."

"My, my," said Uncle Al.

"I've been thinking it's about time for me to go to work with y'all," Jim said.

"Hmm," said Uncle Zeno.

"I thought maybe you could use some help hoeing that corn."

"We can usually put a good hand to work," Uncle Zeno said. "You a good hand?"

"Yes, sir," said Jim.

"You ain't afraid to work?"

"No, sir."

"What do you say, boys?" Uncle Zeno said.

Uncle Al and Uncle Coran looked at each other. Uncle Coran winked.

"He'll do, I guess," said Uncle Al.

"Let's get at it, then," said Uncle Zeno.

¹ hefted: lifted

² tethered: bound

³ kept their own counsel: stayed by themselves

"Breakfast" from *Jim the Boy* by Tony Earley, copyright © 2000 by Tony Earley. Used by permission of Little, Brown, and Company.

Anna and the King

Introduction

The year is 1862. Anna Leonowens is an English woman living in India whose husband, a captain in the British Army, has recently died. To support herself and her young son Louis, she accepts a position as tutor to the son of the King of Siam. She arrives in Bangkok with Louis and two Indian servants, knowing no one. Although she has been promised a house of her own, she finds that she has been assigned quarters in the palace; she asks to see the king, but the Prime Minister, known as the Kralahome, tells her that she must wait until the king is ready to see her. He addresses Anna as *Sir* because women are not allowed to stand in the king's presence, and Anna refuses to kneel.

The Grand Palace, Bangkok.
Several weeks after Anna's arrival.

The Kralahome escorts Anna and Louis to the Hall of Audience. There, ranged on a deep red carpet is a throng of prostrate¹ noblemen and courtiers facing a raised dais; on it, the imposing figure of Siam's ruler, King Mongkut, sits on a golden throne. Just off the dais stands Alak, his Majesty's highly decorated Consul-General. A French emissary advances to present His Majesty with a jewel-encrusted sword.

LOUIS (*whispering*): Look at the sword!

ANNA: It's a gift from the French. (*King Mongkut delivers a clapped command to the interpreter, who accepts the sword. The entire assemblage begins a series of bows.*)

KRALAHOME: It appears Sir must wait to meet His Majesty another day.

ANNA: I do not think so. (*She takes her son's hand and hurries down the stairs toward the throne as musicians play the king's exit. Kralahome, caught off-guard, hurries to catch up with her. She curtsies deeply as she approaches the king.*) Your Majesty, my name is Anna Leonowens. (*King Mongkut turns, shocked. His bodyguards draw swords, blocking Anna's path.*) I am the schoolteach—

MONGKUT: STOP!!! (*Startled, Anna does just that. King Mongkut strides toward her.*) WHO?!?

KRALAHOME (*prostrating himself*): Your Majesty, Mme² Anna Leonowens and son, Louis.

ANNA: Your Majesty, I have waited nearly three weeks.

MONGKUT: SILENCE! (*He gazes at Anna, intrigued.*) YOU are teacher?

ANNA (*flustered*): Yes, I am.

MONGKUT: You do not look sufficient of age. How many years have you?

ANNA: Enough to know that age and wisdom do not necessarily go hand in hand, Your Majesty. (*King Mongkut nods. Then he abruptly heads off.*)

KRALAHOME: His Majesty has not dismissed you. Follow him! (*Anna and Louis run to keep up with the king.*)

MONGKUT: You articulate logical answer under pressure, Mme Leonowens—

ANNA: That is very kind of—

MONGKUT: —but irritating superior attitude King find most unbeautiful. However, it will serve you well given decision I now make. (*They reach a pair of massive double doors.*)

Along with Prince Chulalongkorn, you shall teach my children. (*Guards push open the doors and the trio step into the gardens of the children's park. Scores of princes and princesses, none older than eleven, play around pools and pavilions. Peacocks stroll the grounds. A gong announces the king's presence. Everyone turns, sees the king, and drops to the ground.*) Attention, my most blessed and royal family, we have company. (*King Mongkut motions Anna and Louis to follow him. He stops before a teenage boy, and nods his head. This is Prince Chulalongkorn, King Mongkut's oldest son.*) Presenting Heir Apparent, Prince Chulalongkorn. And this, my son, is your new teacher.

PRINCE (*astonished*): Why do you punish me with imperialist schoolteacher? (*King Mongkut, understanding his son's distress, turns to the crowd.*)

MONGKUT: Dearest family, I desire you all to be educated in English language, science, and literature. You must never forget to honor your renowned teacher, Mme Anna Leonowens.

ANNA: Your Majesty, the opportunity to begin a school is exciting. Such devotion to progress is to be commended.

MONGKUT: As father, I understand.

ANNA: Then Your Majesty appreciates why having a home outside the palace is of such importance to me.

MONGKUT (*firmly*): It is my pleasure that you live in the palace.

ANNA (*equally firmly*): But it is not mine, Your Majesty.

MONGKUT (*eyes flashing*): You do not set conditions, and you shall OBEY!

ANNA: May I respectfully remind His Majesty that I am not his servant, but his guest.

MONGKUT (*after a tense moment*): A guest who is paid. (*He heads for the gates.*)

ANNA: And what of our house?

MONGKUT (*without turning*): Everything has its own time. (*He is gone. The entire crowd stares at Anna in awe. A woman has just argued with their king.*)

¹ prostrate: lying face down, as in submission
² Mme: abbreviation for Madame

Foul Shot

by Edwin A. Hoey

With two 60s stuck on the scoreboard And two seconds hanging on the clock, The solemn boy in the center of eyes, Squeezed by silence, Seeks out the line with his feet, Soothes his hands along his uniform, Gently drums the ball against the floor, Then measures the waiting net, Raises the ball on his right hand, Balances it with his left, Calms it with fingertips, Breathes, Crouches, Waits, And then through a stretching of stillness, Nudges it upward.	5
The ball Slides up and out, Lands, Leans, Wobbles, Wavers, Hesitates, Exasperates, Plays it coy Until every face begs with unsounding screams— And then	10
And then	15
And then,	20
Right before ROAR-UP, Dives down and through.	25
	30

"Foul Shot"

by Edwin Hoey, reprinted with special permission granted by *Read Magazine*, published by Weekly Reader Corporation. Copyright © 1962, renewed 1990 by Weekly Reader Corporation.

Yes, I Can!

by Robert Fulghum

OVER THE LAST COUPLE OF years I have been a frequent guest in schools, most often invited by kindergartens and colleges. The environments differ only in scale. In the beginners' classroom and on university campuses the same opportunities and facilities exist. Tools for reading and writing are there—words and numbers; areas devoted to scientific experiment—labs and work boxes; and those things necessary for the arts—paint, music, costumes, room to dance—likewise present and available. In kindergarten, however, the resources are in one room, with access for all. In college, the resources are in separate buildings, with limited availability. But the most apparent difference is in the self-image of the students.

Ask a kindergarten class, "How many of you can draw?" and all hands shoot up. Yes, of course we can draw—all of us. What can you draw? Anything! How about a dog eating a fire truck in a jungle? Sure! How big you want it?

How many of you can sing? All hands. Of course we sing! What can you sing? Anything! What if you don't know the words? No problem, we make them up. Let's sing! Now? Why not!

How many of you dance? Unanimous again. What kind of music do you like to dance to? Any kind! Let's dance! Now? Sure, why not?

⁵ Do you like to act in plays? Yes! Do you play musical instruments? Yes! Do you write poetry? Yes! Can you read and write and count? Yes! We're learning that stuff now.

Their answer is Yes! Over and over again, Yes! The children are confident in spirit, infinite in resources, and eager to learn. Everything is still possible.

Try those same questions on a college audience. A small percentage of the students will raise their hands when asked if they draw or dance or sing or paint or act or play an instrument. Not infrequently, those who do raise their hands will want to qualify their response with their limitations: "I only play piano, I only draw horses, I only dance to rock and roll, I only sing in the shower."

When asked why the limitations, college students answer they do not have talent, are not majoring in the subject, or have not done any of these things since about third grade, or worse, that they are embarrassed for others to see them sing or dance or act. You can imagine the response to the same questions asked of an older audience. The answer: No, none of the above.

What went wrong between kindergarten and college?

¹⁰ What happened to YES! of course I can?

On the occasion of his graduation from engineering college last June, I gave my number-two son a gift of a "possibles bag."

The frontiersmen who first entered the American West were a long way from the resources of civilization for long periods of time. No matter what gear and supplies they started out with, they knew that sooner or later these would run out and they would have to rely on essentials.

These essentials they called their "possibles"—with these items they could survive, even prevail, against all odds. In a small leather bag strung around their neck they carried a brass case containing flint and steel and tinder to make fire. A knife on their belt, powder and shot, and a gun completed their possibles.

Many survived even when all these items were lost or stolen.

Because their real possibles were contained in a skin bag carried just behind their eyeballs. The lore of the wilderness won by experience, imagination, courage, dreams, and self-confidence. These were the essentials that armed them when all else failed.

I gave my son a replica of the frontiersmen's possibles bag to remind him of this attitude. In a sheepskin sack I placed flint and steel and tinder, that he might make his own fire when necessary; a Swiss Army knife—the biggest one with the most tools; a small lacquer box that contained a wishbone I saved from a Thanksgiving turkey—for luck. Invisible in the possibles bag were his father's hopes and his father's blessing. The idea of the possibles bag was the real gift. He will add his own possibles to what I've given him.

His engineering degree simply attests that he has come back home from an adventure in the great wilderness of science. He has claimed a clearing in the woods as his own.

The sheepskin sack is to remind him that the possibles bag inside his head is what took him there, brought him back, and will send him forth with confidence again and again and yet again, in that spirit of "Yes, I can!"

"Yes, I Can!" from *UH OH* by Robert Fulghum, copyright © 1991, by Robert Fulghum. Used by permission of the author.

Bug, Interrupted

by Jane Meneely

Who was I setting free that night: myself, my daughter, or just the fireflies?

Summer nights on the Eastern Shore, when the sun finally settles below the lip of the land and a misty haze hangs like netting from the tops of the trees, the magic begins. Slowly at first, like dancers drifting onto a dance floor, fireflies begin to wink through the tall grass that rings our field. When I was a kid, this was the signal for me to race through the dark, flailing an open jam jar at the shimmering creatures. I'd try to scoop them all inside my jar so I could carry the magic with me forever. Then came the abrupt call to bed, and I'd punch holes in the jar lid with an ice pick and set the glassy cage on my night table.

I'd settle into my pillow to watch the firefly shadows on my walls. I thought they must be fairies, ready to transform into their true gauzy, winged selves while I slept. If I could stay awake long enough, I'd be able to get a glimpse of them and make a wish. Of course I would let them go in the morning. But morning would come, and I'd have a jar full of dead bugs on my table—little dried husks. I don't know when it dawned on me that I'd been the instrument of their deaths, but I know at some point I stopped chasing fireflies and just sat on my porch and watched them, feeling vaguely guilty about the countless generations I'd snuffed.

Eventually I grew up and came to have a daughter of my own. She too would watch the flickers fill the evening. On the Shore they swarm through the woods at night, great clouds of flashing beacons moving every which way. When Lindsay was big enough, she toddled after them, cupping her hands to catch them and gazing in wonder at the firefly blinking on her palm. And then came the jam jars, and she too would scoop and swipe in the dark, collecting a treasure-trove of flashing delight.

"I must have caught a hundred of them," she said one night, breathless from careening around in the field. Sweat made its way in muddy streaks down her cheeks. Jagged snags of blood seeped from her bare calves where the blackberry brambles had grabbed her. She waved the jar triumphantly, and indeed she had captured a full horde of fireflies. "I'm going to put it next to my bed tonight," she declared. "It will be my night-light."

We washed off the sweat and prickles and she settled into bed. The jam jar stood straight and tall on the night table, its soft beads of light growing, fading, growing, fading. Faint shadows rose and fell on the wall. "It's like stars breathing," she said.

I looked at my daughter, watched her eyelids droop, saw her fingers relax. And I quietly lifted the jar and walked from the room. I couldn't bear to leave the fireflies to die, trapped in the glass castle. I couldn't bear to let Lindsay wake up and find the gentle creatures dead. So I unscrewed the lid and shook them free in the yard. When she woke the next morning and found the jar empty, Lindsay shrugged. "You let them go, didn't you?" she said blithely.¹ I said, "They would have died if I hadn't."

Sooner or later, she found out the hard way that living things left in jars die. Maybe I should have allowed her that pang of guilt that wafts from a jar of lifeless bugs. But why? Surely life's lessons needn't deliberately come at such expense. And perhaps I, the parent, needed . . . oh, who *knows*? All I really know is that the fireflies appreciated my effort that night. For them, it must have been wonderful to tumble back into the night air, to feel the soft wind again, to light up the dance floor one more time.

¹ blithely: cheerfully or lightheartedly

Fireflies In The Garden

Here come real stars to fill the upper skies,
And here on earth come emulating flies,
That though they never equal stars in size,
(And they were never really stars at heart)
Achieve at times a very star-like start.
Only, of course, they can't sustain¹ the part.

1

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—Robert Frost

¹sustain: keep up

"Fireflies In The Garden" from *The Poetry of Robert Frost* edited by Edward Connery Lathern. Copyright © 1928 © 1956, 1969 by Robert Frost. Reprinted by permission of Henry Holt and Company, LLC.

Rough Road Ahead: Do Not Exceed Posted Speed Limit

by Joe Kurmaskie

FORGET THAT OLD SAYING ABOUT NEVER taking candy from strangers. No, a better piece of advice for the solo cyclist would be, "Never accept travel advice from a collection of old-timers who haven't left the confines of their porches since Carter¹ was in office." It's not that a group of old guys doesn't know the terrain. With age comes wisdom and all that, but the world is a fluid place. Things change.

At a reservoir campground outside of Lodi, California, I enjoyed the serenity of an early-summer evening and some lively conversation with these old codgers.² What I shouldn't have done was let them have a peek at my map. Like a foolish youth, the next morning I followed their advice and launched out at first light along a "shortcut" that was to slice away hours from my ride to Yosemite National Park.

They'd sounded so sure of themselves when pointing out landmarks and spouting off towns I would come to along this breezy jaunt.

Things began well enough. I rode into the morning with strong legs and a smile on my face. About forty miles into the pedal, I arrived at the first "town." This place might have been a thriving little spot at one time—say, before the last world war—but on that morning it fit the traditional definition of a ghost town. I chuckled, checked my water supply, and moved on. The sun was beginning to beat down, but I barely noticed it. The cool pines and rushing rivers of Yosemite had my name written all over them.

Twenty miles up the road, I came to a fork of sorts. One ramshackle shed, several rusty pumps, and a corral that couldn't hold in the lamest mule greeted me. This sight was troubling. I had been hitting my water bottles pretty regularly, and I was traveling through the high deserts of California in June.

I got down on my hands and knees, working the handle of the rusted water pump with all my strength. A tarlike substance oozed out, followed by brackish water feeling somewhere in the neighborhood of two hundred degrees. I pumped that handle for several minutes, but the water wouldn't cool down. It didn't matter. When I tried a drop or two, it had the flavor of battery acid.

The old guys had sworn the next town was only eighteen miles down the road. I could make that! I would conserve my water and go inward for an hour or so—a test of my inner spirit.

Not two miles into this next section of the ride, I noticed the terrain changing. Flat road was replaced by short, rolling hills. After I had crested the first few of these, a large highway sign jumped out at me. It read: ROUGH ROAD AHEAD: DO NOT EXCEED POSTED SPEED LIMIT.

The speed limit was 55 mph. I was doing a water-depleting 12 mph. Sometimes life can feel so cruel.

I toiled on. At some point, tumbleweeds crossed my path and a ridiculously large snake—it really did look like a diamondback—blocked the majority of the pavement in front of me. I eased past, trying to keep my balance in my dehydrated state.

The water bottles contained only a few tantalizing sips. Wide rings of dried sweat circled my shirt, and the growing realization that I could drop from heatstroke on a gorgeous day in June simply because I listened to some gentlemen who hadn't been off their porch in decades, caused me to laugh.

It was a sad, hopeless laugh, mind you, but at least I still had the energy to feel sorry for myself. There was no one in sight, not a building, car, or structure of any kind. I began

breaking the ride down into distances I could see on the horizon, telling myself that if I could make it that far, I'd be fine.

Over one long, crippling hill, a building came into view. I wiped the sweat from my eyes to make sure it wasn't a mirage, and tried not to get too excited. With what I believed was my last burst of energy, I maneuvered down the hill.

In an ironic twist that should please all sadists reading this, the building—abandoned years earlier, by the looks of it—had been a Welch's Grape Juice factory and bottling plant. A sandblasted picture of a young boy pouring a refreshing glass of juice into his mouth could still be seen.

I hung my head.

That smoky blues tune "Summertime" rattled around in the dry honeycombs of my deteriorating brain.

I got back on the bike, but not before I gathered up a few pebbles and stuck them in my mouth. I'd read once that sucking on stones helps take your mind off thirst by allowing what spit you have left to circulate. With any luck I'd hit a bump and lodge one in my throat.

It didn't really matter. I was going to die and the birds would pick me clean, leaving only some expensive outdoor gear and a diary with the last entry in praise of old men, their wisdom, and their keen sense of direction. I made a mental note to change that paragraph if it looked like I was going to lose consciousness for the last time.

Somehow, I climbed away from the abandoned factory of juices and dreams, slowly gaining elevation while losing hope. Then, as easily as rounding a bend, my troubles, thirst, and fear were all behind me.

GARY AND WILBER'S FISH CAMP—IF YOU WANT BAIT FOR THE BIG ONES, WE'RE YOUR BEST BET!

"And the only bet," I remember thinking.

As I stumbled into a rather modern bathroom and drank deeply from the sink, I had an overwhelming urge to seek out Gary and Wilber, kiss them, and buy some bait—any bait, even though I didn't own a rod or reel.

An old guy sitting in a chair under some shade nodded in my direction. Cool water dripped from my head as I slumped against the wall beside him.

"Where you headed in such a hurry?"

"Yosemite," I whispered.

"Know the best way to get there?"

I watched him from the corner of my eye for a long moment. He was even older than the group I'd listened to in Lodi.

"Yes, sir! I own a very good map."

And I promised myself right then that I'd always stick to it in the future.

¹ Carter: Jimmy Carter, President of the United States, 1977–1981

² codgers: eccentric men

Unfolding Bud

One is amazed	1
By a water-lily bud	
Unfolding	
With each passing day,	
Taking on a richer color	5
And new dimensions.	
One is not amazed	
At first glance,	
By a poem,	
Which is as tight-closed	10
As a tiny bud.	
Yet one is surprised	
To see the poem	
Gradually unfolding,	
Revealing its rich inner self,	15
As one reads it	
Again	
And over again.	

Naoshi Koriyama

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English Indicator 1.2.2

Answer Key

Public Release Item #1 - Selected Response (SR) - 2005

A. convey a sense of wonder about the experience

Public Release Item #2 - Selected Response (SR) - 2005

B. The lions are camouflaged in the tall grass, but the longer the author looks, the better she can make them out.

Public Release Item #3 - Selected Response (SR) - 2006

B. avoid arguments

Public Release Item #4 - Selected Response (SR) - 2006

A. angrily

Public Release Item #5 - Selected Response (SR) - 2006

B. the spectators on the player

Public Release Item #6 - Selected Response (SR) - 2006

C. used intelligence and imagination to survive

Public Release Item #7 - Selected Response (SR) - 2007

D. "trapped in the glass castle"

Public Release Item #8 - Selected Response (SR) - 2007

A. information is out of date

Public Release Item #9 - Selected Response (SR) - 2007

C. that poetry often has hidden meaning